A LETTER TO Dr. *Sacheverell*,

Suppos'd to be Written by

St. [redacted]MES,

The First

BISHOP OF *JERUSALEM.*

LONDON,
Printed for *John Lawrence*, at the *Angel* in the *Poultrey*. 1710.

A

LETTER

TO

Dr. Sacheverell,

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LONDON,

Printed for Sold by Bernard Lintot, at the Sign of the Cross Keys between the Two Temple Gates in Fleet-street. 1710.

A LETTER TO Dr. *Sacheverell*, &c.

SIR,

THE Zeal of my much beloved Brother *Paul* was found no less useful to the Church after his Conversion, than it was injurious to it before; and because your Zeal, and the Zeal of many others of your Sortment wants Light rather than Heat, I beseech you and them, not to take it amiss, if I endeavour to convince you, that you are strangely forgetful of some of the first Principles of the Oracles of God, and to render your Zeal for God according to Knowledge.

You and your Friends profeſs a great Reverence for Antiquity, and yet altho' I and my Fellow-Apoſtles held but one Council on the Subject of keeping the Church in Peace, tho' there was but one Seſſion of that Council, and but one Canon made at that Seſſion, and altho' a Religious Obſervation of that Canon wou'd make and eſtabliſh Peace in the Chriſtian World, you take no manner of Notice of it, but act as if you never look'd into your Bible, nor had any Reverence for the Apoſtolical College.

Acts 15.1. The Hiſtory of this Matter you have in the Acts of the Apoſtles; for certain itinerant Incendiaries, who came down from *Judea* to *Antioch*, had taught the Brethren, that except they were circumcis'd after the Manner of *Moſes* they cou'd not be ſav'd. This occaſi-
Acts 11. 26. on'd at *Antioch* (where the Diſciples were firſt call'd Chriſtians) much Diſputation, and the impoſing Spirit made
Acts 15.2. *Paul* and *Barnabas* to be the firſt Diſſenters, and they, together with divers other Members of that Church, came up to lay that Queſtion before me and my Fellow-Apoſtles, and the Presbyters of the Church at *Jeruſalem*.

Acts 15.5. The High-Church Party, who were of the Sect of the *Phariſees*, which believ'd, inſiſted on their Impoſitions, ſaying, that

it was needful to circumcise the new Converts, and to command them to keep the Law of *Moses*.

This occasion'd the aforesaid Council to meet, and you know, Sir, that at the Day of Pentecost we had receiv'd the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghost, and were indu'd with Power from on High, yet we did not thunder our Anathema's, nor bring these Men, however erroneous, to the Devil and his Angels, and leave them there, but we allow'd much Disputing thereabout. Indeed my Brother *Peter* charg'd them with tempting God by their Impositions, and you know, Sir, that the Word signifies, *Deum quasi data opera provocari*. They did seem *Gigantes æmulari*, they would have a Trial of Skill with God himself, whether they cou'd not impose unnecessary things, and yet keep the Church in Peace; the Holy Ghost, and we the Apostles, the Presbyters, and the whole Church, were of Opinion that they could not, and therefore we came to a Resolution, that the only way to preserve the Peace of the Universal Church, was, not to impose unnecessary things. Indeed, among those few things which were impos'd on the *Gentile* Converts, what relates to Blood, and things strangl'd, were excepted out of the first License to eat Flesh, given to the Post-Diluvian World, and that Pro- Acts 15. 10.

Prohibition no part of the ceremonial Law, and we thought it neceſſary to continue it at that time. But pray obſerve our Reaſon, *viz.* Becauſe *Moſes* was read in the Synagogues every Sabbath-Day, and our firſt Deſign was upon the loſt Sheep of the Houſe of *Iſrael*. Now Sir, you and your Brethren, almoſt as ſoon as you begin you Prayers in the Pulpit, are got to all *Jews*, *Turks*, *Infidels and Heretick*s, for whom you cannot pray in Faith, unleſs you leave off to demand any Terms of Communion, which you cannot prove to be requir'd by the Oracles of God; for the Command given us to Diſciple all Nations, directs to the Means of ſo doing, *viz.* Teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever our Lord had commanded; and in ſo doing only, we have the Promiſe of his Preſence to the end of the World. And you ask a moſt material Queſtion, *Page* 17. Can we either add to, or diminiſh from the leaſt jot of our Religion? Are we to take its Conſtitution as our Saviour and his Diſciples deliver'd it down to us? Or have we Authority to curtail, mangle, or alter it? Right good, *Dr.* Therefore certainly the Chriſtian Church ought to have follow'd our Example, and neither to have continu'd old, nor invented new Impoſitions without Neceſſity: And whoever, by

Sermon at St. Paul's, Pag. 17.

by oppoſing ſuch Impoſitions, ſtand faſt in the Liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made them free, ought rather to be commended, than anathematiz'd. Yet, altho' this firſt Principle is ſo evident, and the Conſequence drawn from it, ſo juſt, yet ſeveral Churches, even under our infallible Direction, had their different Uſages without therefore Anathematizing one another. As for National Churches, there is no Divine Direction concerning them; but nothing ought to exclude a Chriſtian from being a Member of a National, which doth not exclude him from being a Member of the Catholick Church, even you your ſelf being Judge. You know, Sir, that my Name-ſake *James*, the Brother of *John*, one of the *Boanerges*, or Sons of Thunder, in calling for Fire from Heaven on thoſe who wou'd not receive our Maſter, miſtook the Nature of his Thunder as much as you do the Nature of Excommunication; and it pleas'd the Divine Providence to permit him to ſuffer Death the firſt of the Apoſtolical College. And you cannot but know, that his Brother *John*, altho' moſt expreſs and copious in aſſerting the Divinity of our Lord, is alſo ſo in inculcating Chriſtian Love and Charity. Such was the Influence which our Maſter's Reproof had upon him, when he told Gal. 5. 1.

told the two Brethren, that they knew not what Spirit they were of, and such the Effect of the Intimacy, which that beloved Disciple had with our Blessed Lord: And as his Brother dy'd the first, so he liv'd the longest of us all. Consider, Sir, in order to bring your self into Temper, that the Names of Bishop and Presbyter were promiscuously us'd, and no difference of Order thought of by us the Apostles, or our Successors, for the first two hundred Years that we the Apostles left many Churches govern'd by their Bishops, together with their Presbyters; and divers other Churches, particularly the Churches of *Corinth* and *Philippi*, govern'd by Presbyters without Bishops, that is to say, without any stated President, or προεδρος, and in this regard the present Constitution of *Great Britain* is more agreeable to the primitive Pattern, than that of any other Nation, part of the Island being under Episcopal, the other part under Presbyterian Government. Consider also, that we the Apostles, not any of us refus'd to Communicate occasionally with the Churches who had different Usages, or quarrel'd with any Church for that Reason, unless such Usages were added to Christianity, or impos'd; and altho' thro' fear of those of the Circumcision, who came from

me,

me, my Brother *Peter* did withdraw from Communion with the *Gentile* Church of *Antioch*, yet by the Rebukes of my Brother *Paul*, he ſtood corrected, and none of us were ever after guilty of that Miſtake: Altho' my Brother *Paul* told the *Gentile* Churches of *Galatia*, that if they were circumcis'd, Chriſt ſhould profit them nothing; yet neither he, nor any of the Apoſtles, nor their Succeſſors, did excommunicate any of my thirteen Succeſſors in the See of *Jeruſalem*, who were circumcis'd; nor did I, or my Succeſſors, refuſe Communion with any Chriſtians who came to *Jeruſalem*, becauſe they were not circumcis'd. The Chriſtians in the Apoſtolical Age, had learn'd to ſpeak the ſame thing without any Liturgies or Homilies, altho' in latter Ages they have been found of great Uſe. And what a ridiculous thing is it for you, Reverend Sir, to ſend Millions to the Devil and his Angels, for praying and preaching as we did; to make no difference between Chriſtians and Infidels; to make it a Mark of a Falſe Brother, to hold, that a Chriſtian may ſerve God in any Way, or Congregation of Worſhip, as well by extemporary Prayers, as by a preſcrib'd Form and Liturgy. (*Serm. at St. Paul's, Page* 10.) By which the whole

Gal. 2. 11.

Gal. 5. 2.

Christian World for the first 200 Years, are condemn'd as False Brethren; for, as to the Liturgy father'd on me, and other such pretended ancient Liturgies, you cannot but know, that they are spurious. I cannot but observe what a strange Turn Bigotry hath given your Thoughts, and particularly with respect to the Danger of the Church; for, as you take *Elisha* to have been in Danger, from the Horses and Chariots of Fire which were round about him, which were his Defence and Security, and are not at all apprehensive of his Danger of the Host of *Syrians*, which had encompass'd him; so you have no Apprehensions from the formidable Power of *Rome*, and its Votaries, but all your Apprehensions are from that Union, and Christian Liberty, which is the Glory and Safety of *Great Britain*. Sir, you cannot but remember that my Brother *Paul* advises Christians to beware lest any Man spoil them thro' Philosophy, and vain Deceit, after the Tradition of Men, after the Rudiments of the World, and not after Christ, in which Passage he had a particular Regard to the then famous Moralists, especially the justly admir'd *Seneca*; and gives a necessary Caution against taking up with moral Rudiments, and the

Col. 2. 8.

Charms

Charms of their Philoſophy, to the neglect of the Chriſtian Doctrine; and therefore he immediately adds concerning our Bleſſed Saviour, that in him dwelt all the Fullneſs of the Godhead bodily, and we are compleat in him; glorious was the Influence of the Chriſtian Inſtitution; or which is the ſame thing in other words, the Grace of God, which brought Salvation in teaching Men, that denying Ungodlineſs and Worldly Luſts, they ſhou'd live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent World; many Thouſand glorious Saints, Martyrs, and Confeſſors, were form'd by the Preaching of the Apoſtles, whilſt Philoſophy, manag'd by *Seneca*, form'd a *Nero*, and wrought very little Reformation in the World. And yet, Sir, how did your Party, thro' all the Reign of King *Charles* the Second, neglect *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, and *John*, and make your Pulpits ring with *Socrates*, *Cicero*, *Seneca*, and *Epictetus*? How did they expoſe other Preaching as Cant and Enthuſiaſm, and when by the neglect of reveal'd Religion, Opportunity was given to the Riſe of a numerous Generation of Atheiſts, Deiſts, and *Socinians*? Now you roar at your own Progeny, and pretend to ſend them and the Party who preſerv'd, reveal'd

Tit. 2. 11, 12.

Religion, to the Devil both together. Take my Advice, if you would ſecure the Chriſtian Religion, don't rail at Men who worſhip God after the ſame manner with the Apoſtles, and the Chriſtians of the firſt three Centuries; and if you are really deſirous to prevent the growth of Atheiſm, Deiſm, and Socinianiſm, in the firſt place remember what I long ſince taught you, That

James 1. 26. if any Man ſeem to be Religious, and bridleth not his Tongue, but deceiveth his own Heart, that Man's Religion is vain. I told you long ſince, that the

James 3. 6. Tongue is a Fire, a World of Iniquity, ſo is the Tongue amongſt our Members, that it defileth the whole Body, and ſetteth on fire the Courſe of Nature; and it is ſet on fire of Hell, that therewith Men bleſs God, and therewith they curſe Men, at the ſame time inſtructing you, that theſe things ought not to be. But by your neglect of theſe Inſtructions, you have made yourſelf a flaming Inſtance of my Obſervation, how great a Matter a little Fire

James 3. 5. kindleth. Leave off, Sir, your bitter Envying, and Strife, and remember what

James 3. 15. I have told you, That Wiſdom deſcendeth not from Above, but is earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh: Do not therefore go on railing, damning, and curſing, but

yo

you would entirely reconile the Diſſenters to the Church, and make it needleſs to re-edify the Chapels which your Party have demoliſh'd, or rebuild them to be Chapels of Eaſe in the reſpective Pariſhes, pray with all Fervency that God would incline the Hearts both of the Governours, and the private Members of the Chriſtian Body throughout the World, to reduce the Chriſtian Faith and Worſhip to its primitive Simplicity and Integrity, and to lay the Streſs of Religion more upon Practice, than upon Profeſſion. And if you would put a ſtop to the Growth of Atheiſm, Deiſm, and Sociniamiſm, do you and your Brethren perſwade your People to read, and ſtudy the Epiſtle of my Brother *Jude*, and the 2d Chapter of the 2d Epiſtle of my Fellow-Apoſtle, *Peter*, in which they will find the Characters, Practices, Errors, and Fate of theſe Men, particularly deſcrib'd, foretold, confuted, and pronounc'd; and if you agree to preach on proper Texts in thoſe Chapters, you will expoſe their Characters, reform their Practices, confute their Errors, and prevent their Infection, and by converting their Perſons, hinder, or otherwiſe haſten their Fate; and do this, as remembring that the laſt Sentence which I left to the World in Writing, is this, That he

Dr. Bradford's *Sermon*, June 16. 1709. *Page* 11.

he that converteth the Sinner from the
James 5. 20. Error of his Way, ſhall ſave a Soul from Death, and ſhall hide a multitude of Sins; and that I have alſo told you, that the Wiſdom which is from Above,
Jam. 3. 17. is firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle, and eaſy to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality, and without Hypocriſy, and the Fruit of Righteouſneſs is ſown in Peace of theirs that make Peace. But if you will always drive Atheiſts, Deiſts, and *Socinians*, and Chriſtians of ſeveral Denominations, who preſerve the whole ſacred *Depoſitum*, into the ſame Herd, and hunt them all together with the Devil and his Angels, you will run your ſelf off your Legs, and your own Pack will devour you.

I have, Sir, one Requeſt to you in behalf of my ſelf. You know, that the Sect of the *Jacobites* in the *Eaſt* are a numerous Sect, and beſides the Sign of the Croſs, which they make with one Finger, to ſhew that there is but one Perſon in Oppoſition to the Trinity, have a ſtrange Cuſtom of baptizing with a red hot Iron in the Forehead; now altho' this Cuſtom ſeems agreeable enough to the Temper of you and your Bre-
☞ Matt. 3. 11. thren, yet becauſe there is a Text that ſeems to countenance it, you have not eſpous'd

eſpous'd it in the *Weſt*, but are extremely fond of that other Addition to Baptiſm, which hath not the leaſt Colour from any Text. Now my Requeſt is, that you would pleaſe to inform your People, that the Sect of the *Jacobites* took their Name from *Jacob Bordæus*, a *Syrian*, a Diſciple of *Eutyches*, and *Droſcorus*, and not from me, who never heard of either of thoſe Cuſtoms in my Life-time, tho' I ſat Biſhop of *Jeruſalem* for twenty nine Years. You might poſſibly, Sir, have expected that I ſhould have taken Notice of the Politicks with which your Sermon abounds, but, becauſe neither our Lord and Maſter, when on Earth, nor any of his Apoſtles did ever intermeddle with the Conſtitutions of Governments, nor to determine the Right of Princes or States, I muſt be excus'd from animadverting thereon, and leave that matter to my *Amanuenſis*, concluding with repeating that ſingle Canon, truly Apoſtolical, made to preſerve Peace in the Church, *Do not impoſe unneceſſary Things.*

JAMES.

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